Index to Minutes
of
20 February 1963

I. Submissions

District of Columbia Government

1. Department of Highways and Traffic

Tree rehabilitation program for Pennsylvania Avenue 1

2. Department of Buildings and Grounds

Lewis Charles Rabaut Junior High School - proposed design 2

Hine Junior High School - proposed design 2

Mildred Green Elementary School-revised design 3

Public Library, 3d and K Sts. SW- revised design 3

3. Department of Licenses and Inspection

SL 2553 - 1845 Harvard Street - proposed apartment house 4

4. Department of the Interior-National Park Service

Rock Creek Park Golf Club House - proposed design 5

C&O Canal Barge Landing - proposed design 5

Fort Washington Employees Residence - proposed design 5

Stanton Park-proposed redevelopment 6

MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
20 FEBRUARY 1963

The Commission met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m., with David E. Finley, Chairman, presiding.

Present were: Members - David E. Finley
Felix W. de Weldon
Douglas W. Orr
William G. Perry
Hideo Sasaki

Staff: L.R.Wilson,Executive Secretary
C.L.Martin, Counsel
Susan E. Bennett, Admin Asst
Myra Younker, Editor
Charles Benton, Recorder

I. SUBMISSIONS-REVIEWS-INTERVIEWS

1. Department of Highways and Traffic
Tree Rehabilitation Program for Pennsylvania Avenue, First to Seventeenth Streets, N.W.

Mr. G.I. Sawyer, Deputy Director for Engineering Design and Research, D.C.Department of Highways and Traffic, met with the Commission concerning a proposed tree rehabilitation program. He explained that the Department of Highways and Traffic had become concerned about the poor condition of many of the trees along Pennsylvania Avenue and had employed Mr. John Baylor, landscape architect, to survey their condition and to prepare recommendations as to what should be done about them. He then introduced Mr. Baylor, who explained the results of his survey.

Mr. Baylor reported that most of the older trees on Pennsylvania Avenue were sycamores, and many of them were already afflicted with a disease which is, at present, incurable. For this reason he recommended that red oaks be planted wherever possible to replace the sycamores. In addition to diseased trees, he reported that no new trees had been planted on the Avenue in recent years to replace dead trees with the result that there are gaps in several places, and finally, there was a need to improve the spacing of trees in many spots along the Avenue.

Mr. Baylor then showed the Commission drawings illustrating three schemes which he had proposed. Scheme No. 1 proposed that only the dead trees would be removed and replaced with red oak trees 3 to 3 1/2 inches in caliber. Scheme No. 2 proposed replacement of dead trees and better spacing of trees, plus planting trees along 15th Street adjacent to the Treasury Building. Scheme No. 3 proposed all of the features of Schemes 1 and 2 plus the removal of all existing sycamores.

After discussing various aspects of the three schemes the Commission concluded that in view of the imminent release of the report of the President's Advisory Council on redevelopment of Pennsylvania Avenue, which the members were certain would contain specific recommendations on landscaping, the District Government would be unwise to embark upon an extensive tree rehabilitation program at this time, such as proposed under Scheme No. 3. However, the members agreed that they had no objection to a modest program such as proposed in Scheme Nos. 2 and 1, and endorsed the recommendation that trees be planted adjacent to the Treasury Building. It was recommended that red oaks 4 to 4 1/2 inches in caliber be utilized rather than 3 to 3 1/2 inch caliber because of their greater size and maturity.

The Chairman was authorized to send a letter to the Engineer Commissioner setting forth the Commission's views. EXHIBIT A

2. Department of Buildings and Grounds

a. Lewis Charles Rabaut Junior High School, North Dakota and Kansas Avenues, N.W. - Proposed Design

Mr. G. A. Purcell, Liaison Officer, D.C. Department of Buildings and Grounds, and Mr. A. Stanley McGaughan, architect of the firm of McGaughan and Johnson, presented renderings and drawings of preliminary plans for the school.

Mr. McGaughan discussed the general site plan and the massing and uses of various parts of the building. He then showed three studies of different architectural treatments of the north elevation which will contain the main entrance. He stated that he preferred Scheme C shown on Sheet No. 1, dated 18 February 1963.

The members agreed that the general arrangement of the large elements in the plan, the gymnasium, cafeteria, assembly-room, etc., were well arranged. They also agreed that the architect should continue to develop the design shown on Sheet No. 1.

The Chairman was authorized to send a letter to the Engineer Commissioner setting forth the Commission's views. EXHIBIT B

b. Hine Junior High School, 7th and C Streets, S.E. - Proposed Design

Mr. Purcell explained that the construction program for the new school required that it be completely erected without disturbing the adjacent existing Hine School on the site. He then introduced Mr. Johnson, architect of Johnson and Boutin, who explained the proposed design.

The members expressed the opinion that a circulation problem existed in the proposed building which arose from the central location of the

gymnasium - cafeteria. They suggested that if this element were detached and put on one end of the building the entire plan could be simplified and a decided improvement made in the elevations.

Mr. Johnson replied that the architects were aware of this criticism of the plan and that they were working on an alternative plan in which the auditorium, gymnasium and classroom building elements would be separated. He stated that this plan seemed promising and he would like to develop it further.

The Commission thereupon agreed to await the submission of alternative schemes for the building.

The Chairman was authorized to send a letter to the Engineer Commissioner setting forth the Commission's views. EXHIBIT C

C. Mildred Green Elementary School, 15th Street and Mississippi Avenue, S.E. - Revised Design

Mr. J. A. MacLane, architect of MacLane and Chewning, presented drawings and renderings of a revised design for the school. He stated that the general arrangement of the plan - two wings connected to a central lobby entrance with double-loaded corridors - had been approved by the Board of Education and that the Department of Buildings and Grounds felt it served its purpose well. Therefore, the plan was not changed. The only significant change was to the design of the center element of the building.

The members' comments regarding the revised center element were that this feature had been improved but that it should be studied further. When pressed for a further explanation of why the general mass of the building could not be studied further both Mr. Purcell and Mr. MacLane gave the impression that restrictions imposed by the Board of Education prevented this. Mr. Purcell stated that further studies would be made of the center element of the building and submitted to the Commission when they are ready.

The Chairman was authorized to send a letter to the Engineer Commissioner setting forth the Commission's views. EXHIBIT D

d. Public Library, 3d and K Streets, S.W. - Revised Design

Drawings and a rendering of a revised design for the building were presented by Mr. Purcell and Mr. A.R. Clas, architect of Clas and Riggs.

The members thought that the revisions to the design had improved the appearance of the building. After some discussion of the possibility of making some changes in the main entrance and the north facade, the

Commission approved the revised design.

The Chairman was authorized to send a letter to the Engineer Commissioner setting forth the Commission's views. EXHIBIT E

3. Department of Licenses and Inspections

S.L. 2553, 1845 Harvard Street, N.W. - Proposed Apartment Building

Mr. Vernon C. Elmore, architect of Corning, Moore, Elmore and Fischer, Mr. Norman Glasgow, attorney of Wilkes and Artis, and Mr. Julian P. Green, Assistant Superintendent of Licenses and Permits, D.C. Department of Licenses and Inspections, met with the Commission to discuss a proposed apartment building at 1845 Harvard Street, N.W.

Mr. Green, in introducing Mr. Elmore, pointed out that in response to the direction of the Board of Commissioners, the architect wished to present certain modifications to the design of the building in an attempt to resolve the impasse which had developed between the Commission and the Tower Construction Company, owners of the building. Mr. Elmore showed the members a drawing illustrating a building of the same unit capacity as the design disapproved by the Commission but located close to the rim of the hill adjacent to an alley at the northern side of the property. The structure would be a 419 foot building, or 104 feet longer than the original building, but the same height. Mr. Elmore stated, however, that this modification did not constitute a solution as far as the owners were concerned because it would result in the loss of 23 parking spaces, which in turn would require the elimination of 69 apartments. He added that extending the building 104 feet would also impose additional expense because of increased foundation costs. In response to the members' question, Mr. Elmore agreed that it would be possible to provide parking facilities on the other portions of the lot, as by a separate two story parking structure, but contended that because of the foundation problem the cost would be prohibitive.

After hearing Mr. Elmore, the members discussed the possibility of resolving their objections by creating a wide terrace on the Harvard Street side of the building which could be heavily landscaped and would screen the building from the entrance to the Zoo. Mr. Elmore stated that he would like to pursue this solution and agreed to submit studies of a terrace for the Commission's recommendation. The members cautioned Mr. Elmore that a terrace would have to be high enough and wide enough to effectively screen the building in order for it to be acceptable, and that it would probably require the elimination of the equivalent of two floors of the building.

The Chairman was authorized to send a letter to Commissioner Tobriner, President of the District of Columbia Board of Commissioners, giving the results of the conference. EXHIBIT F

4. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Capital Region

a. Rock Creek Park Golf Club House - Proposed Design

Mr. T. Sutton Jett, Regional Director; Mr. Robert Horne, Associate Regional Director; and Mr. Thomas J. Madigan, architect, of the National Park Service, presented the design for a new golf club house to replace an existing building on the grounds of the Rock Creek Golf Course.

Mr. Madigan explained the function and design considerations of the various parts of the building. The members expressed their satisfaction with the arrangement of the building and the complicated exterior elevations. There was a general discussion of means of simplifying the structure in certain details.

The Commission requested the architect to restudy the design in accordance with the discussion and to submit a revised design at a later date.

The Chairman was authorized to send a letter giving the views of the Commission. EXHIBIT G

b. Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Barge Landing, Between 30th and Jefferson Streets, N.W. - Proposed Design

Mr. Jett and Mr. David Turrello, landscape architect of the National Capital Region Staff, presented drawings showing proposed improvements to the barge landing. Mr. Jett explained that the landing is used as a place of departure and return for barge trips up and down the C and O Canal and has been used as a parking lot in the past.

The members approved the plans for paving and landscaping the landing, with the suggestions that the benches on the west side be moved back to the north side of the landing and that the west walk be widened to permit full width brick paving squares to be used. The members also approved a proposal to place the historic C and O Canal monument, erected in 1850, on the site.

The Chairman was authorized to send a letter setting forth the views of the Commission. EXHIBIT H

C. Fort Washington Employeee Residence - Proposed Design

Mr. Jett showed the members elevations of a proposed United States Park Police Officer's brick residence to be erected on the Fort Washington grounds.

The members approved the design with the recommendation that care be taken to use windows of uniform size on the rear and side elevations.

The Chairman was authorized to send a letter setting forth the views of the Commission. EXHIBIT I

d. Stanton Park (U.S.Res. 15), Maryland and Massachusetts Avenues, N.E. - Proposed Redevelopment

Mr. David Turello, landscape architect, explained drawings of a proposed redevelopment plan for Stanton Park. He stated that the principal intent of the plan was to accent the Maryland Avenue axis of the park looking toward the Capitol.

The members pointed out that in their opinion the Massachusetts Avenue axis ought to be treated in the same manner as that proposed for Maryland Avenue, i.e. rows of flowering trees and park benches, and that the Fifth Street axis should not be concealed by planting. They also recommended that a perimeter walk should be retained around the park to preserve its symmetry.

The Commission voted to approve the plan with the recommendations made.

The Chairman was authorized to send a letter setting forth the Commission's views. EXHIBIT J

Thereupon, at 12:45 p.m., the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

C. L. Martin

C. L. Martin,
Counsel

27 February 1963

Dear General Clarke:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at its meeting on 20 February, gave further consideration to the tree rehabilitation program proposed by the District Highway Department for the north side of Pennsylvania Avenue between 17th and 1st Streets, N.W. Mr. G. I. Sawyer, Deputy Director for Engineering Design and Research, Mr. E. D. Burke, Engineer of Design, and Mr. John Baylor, Landscape Architect, presented drawings of three possible schemes for carrying out the program.

When the Commission first considered this matter at its meeting on January 29, it was recommended that action on the program be deferred pending the report of the President's Advisory Council regarding redevelopment plans for the north side of Pennsylvania Avenue.

The Commission reaffirmed its belief that these plans would affect the proposals contained in the tree rehabilitation program, and, therefore, urged that no large scale replacement of trees be undertaken prior to the presentation of the Committee's recommendations.

In the meantime, however, the Commission would have no objection to the replacement of missing trees or those which are in especially bad condition, primarily in the interest of maintaining a continuing maturity of planting along the Avenue.

A limited program of this sort would not represent too great a financial commitment so as to preclude possible changes in plans following the submission of the Advisory Council's Report.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley
Chairman

Brigadier General F.J. Clarke
Engineer Commissioner for the
District of Columbia
District Building
Washington 4, D.C.

EXHIBIT A

EXHIBIT A

1 March 1963

Dear General Clarke:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at its meeting on February 20, considered preliminary designs for the proposed Lewis Charles Rabaut Junior High School to be located at the Southwest corner of Kansas and North Dakota Avenues, N.W. Mr. A. Stanley McGaughan, of McGaughan and Johnson, architects of the project, and Mr. G.A. Purcell, Liaison Officer, D.C. Department of Buildings and Grounds, attended the meeting to present the design. Mr. McGaughan brought with him two additional elevation studies which he believed were improvements over the initial scheme submitted for review.

The members of the Commission agreed that the later studies had more merit and recommended that Mr. McGaughan proceed to develop the design along the lines indicated on Sheet No. 1, dated 18 February. This design showed elevations treated with a simple series of brick wall and spandrel panels with recessed joints and a continuous limestone cornice that was approximately flush with the wall but with a slanted fascia. It represented a good balance between the other studies which were either too stark or too complicated.

The Commission also considered that the plan arrangement was especially well handled and that the resulting composition not only functioned well but would be attractive in appearance.

The Commission commended the architect on taking the initiative in making additional studies of the design at an early stage. Such an approach saves time and usually leads to a better result. It is this attitude that the Commission would hope could be encouraged in developing plans for other building projects for the District.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley
Chairman

Brigadier General F.J. Clarke
Engineer Commissioner for the
District of Columbia
District Building
Washington 4, D.C.

EXHIBIT B

1 March 1963

Dear General Clarke:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at its meeting on February 20, considered the preliminary designs for the Hine Junior High School, to be located at the intersection of 7th and "C" Streets, S.E. Mr. D.S.Johnson, of Johnson and Boutin, architects of the project, and Mr. G.A. Purcell, Liaison Officer, D.C. Department of Buildings and Grounds, presented the drawings at the meeting.

The Commission found the plan and design generally unsatisfactory. It was evident that the architect was hampered in reaching a solution by the requirement that the existing school on the site would be preserved until the new school building should be completed. Mr. Johnson, the architect, explained the difficulties he had had with the plan arrangement, and stated that there were deficiencies still to be overcome, especially in regard to the awkward circulation patterns imposed by the location of the gymnasium complex. In the opinion of the members of the Commission, the plan would not function well and the exterior massing was confused.

The Commission concluded that further studies of the plan would be necessary before consideration could be given to the architectural treatment of the building.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley
Chairman

Brig. Gen. F.J.Clarke
Engineer Commissioner for
the District of Columbia
Washington, D.C.

27 February 1963

Dear General Clarke:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at its meeting on February 20th, considered revised design for the Mildred Green Elementary School to be located at 15th Street and Mississippi Avenue, S.E. Mr. J.A. MacLane of MacLane and Channing, architect of the project, and Mr. G.A. Purcell, Liaison Officer, Department of Buildings and Grounds, attended the meeting to present the drawings.

While the Commission noted that the revised design included architectural studies of the building showing the initial two stories, and the third story to be added later, they saw no substantial changes in the architectural character of the design which the first submission conspicuously lacked. Without exception, the members of the Commission believe that the proposed design is far below acceptable standards. The Commission finds it difficult to understand why some projects are capable of improvement through restudy, such as the branch library to be located in the Southwest Renewal Area at 3d and K Streets, while others such as this school remain essentially the same as originally presented.

Whatever the reasons, however, the Commission strongly recommends that a better design should be achieved before any decisions are made to proceed with the construction of this school.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley
Chairman

Brigadier General F. J. Clarke
Engineer Commissioner for the
District of Columbia
District Building
Washington 4, D.C.

Copy to: Mr. J.A.Bloser, Director,
Department of Buildings and Grounds

EXHIBIT D

27 February 1963

Dear General Clarke:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at its meeting on February 20, considered the revised designs for the proposed branch library to be located at 3d and K Streets, in the Southwest Urban Renewal Area. Mr. A.E. Clas, of Clas and Biggs, architects of the project, and Mr. G.A. Purcell, Liaison Officer, Department of Buildings and Grounds, attended the meeting to present the drawings.

The members of the Commission thought that the elevations of the building had been greatly improved over the original design; the exterior form was more regular, the facades were treated in a uniform manner, and in general the building would harmonize much better with other new buildings in the surrounding area. The revised design was approved.

The members thought that the entranceway could still be simplified somewhat, and that a greater glass area could be used to advantage over the projecting canopy, where the vertical strips of glazing terminated somewhat arbitrarily over the doorways.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley
Chairman

Brigadier General F.J.Clarke
Engineer Commissioner for the
District of Columbia
District Building
Washington 4, D.C.

Copy to: Mr. J.A.Glaser, Director,
Department of Buildings and Grounds

EXHIBIT E

28 February 1963

Dear Mr. Tobriner:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at its meeting on February 20th, gave further consideration to the design of a proposed apartment building to be located at 1845 Harvard Street, at the entrance to the National Zoological Park.

The members of the Commission conferred with Mr. Vernon C. Elmore, of Corning, Moore, Elmore and Fischer, architects for the project; and discussed at length the Commission's principal objections to the proposed design. The members suggested possible alternative schemes that might be pursued by the architects as a way of meeting the Commission's objections. Mr. Elmore presented a sketch plan in which the building had been moved back toward the rear property line and above the rim of the park, and the architect agreed to continue studies along this line.

As an alternative solution, the relocation of the building on the eastern part of the site was also discussed. The use of this part of the property would meet many of the objections raised by the Commission, as the building would then front principally on Harvard Street and would be shielded from the park and the Zoo by the wooded area of U.S.Reservation No. 516. It was understood that this alternative plan would be studied by the architect if further studies of the present scheme should prove unsatisfactory to the Commission.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley
Chairman

Honorable Walter N. Tobriner
President
Board of Commissioners of the
District of Columbia
District Building
Washington 4, D.C.

EXHIBIT F

1 March 1953

Dear Mr. Wirth:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at its meeting on February 20, considered preliminary plans for the new Golf Club-House to be located in Rock Creek Park. Mr. William Zalden and Mr. David Turello of the National Capital Region, presented the designs at the meeting.

After carefully studying the proposed plans, the members of the Commission concluded that the design was much too complex for such a small building. The plan arrangement was split into several levels, and the resulting exterior appearance was confused and lacked positive definition.

The Commission, therefore, recommended that the design be restudied with emphasis on providing a simpler architectural expression in both plan and use of materials.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley
Chairman

Honorable Conrad Wirth
Director
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington 25, D.C.

27 February 1963

Dear Mr. Wirth:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at its meeting on February 20, considered preliminary plans for the proposed landscape treatment of U.S.Reservation 404, C&O, which is located on the north side of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal between 30th Street and Thomas Jefferson Street, N.W.

The members of the Commission were glad to see plans to improve the appearance of this area, which not only serves as a landing and point of departure for barge trips on the Canal, but also will be the focal point and setting for the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company monument which is to be moved here from its present location on Wisconsin Avenue.

The Commission thought that the proposed treatment was simple and well organized, and that the informal landscaping was appropriate to the historical nature of the site. They approved the designs with two suggestions: one, that the benches adjoining the barge area be moved back on line with the ticket and storage booth, and two, that the dimensions of the paved walkway from the west be widened enough to accommodate a complete square of the geometric pattern of the brick paving.

The design was also shown to the Board of Architectural Consultants for Old Georgetown, who concurred with the views of the Commission as set forth in the above recommendations.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley
Chairman

Honorable Conrad Wirth
Director
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington 25, D.C.

EXHIBIT H

28 February 1963

Dear Mr. Wirth:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at its meeting on February 20, considered preliminary plans for the new Employees Residence to be located on the grounds of Fort Washington.

The members of the Commission gave general approval to the design, but recommended that the fenestration be restudied on the rear and side elevations to give more regularity to the appearance of the facades.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley
Chairman

Honorable Conrad Wirth
Director
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington 25, D.C.

EXHIBIT I

28 February 1963

Dear Mr. Wirth:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at its meeting on February 20, considered preliminary plans for the landscaping of Stanton Park, U.S.Reservation No. 15, located at the intersection of Maryland and Massachusetts Avenues, N.E. Mr. William Belden and Mr. David Turello of the National Capital Region presented the designs at the meeting.

The proposed design retained the basic circulation of the present park, but strengthened the axis along Maryland Avenue to give emphasis to the vista of the Capitol dome. The members of the Commission approved this approach to the design but thought that the concentrated emphasis on the Maryland Avenue Axis created an imbalance in the other axes of what is essentially a classical composition. They recommended that both the Massachusetts Avenue axis and the Fifth Street axis be clearly defined as elements of the design. In this respect they also urged restraint in the use of informal groups of medium height flowering trees which might tend to confuse the overall organization of the park.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley
Chairman

Honorable Conrad Wirth
Director
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington 25, D.C.